



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

---

## RE-EDUCATION FOR CRIPPLED SOLDIERS

SIR,—Magazine and other statements on the re-education of wounded soldiers usually describe or picture mechanical and human miracles. How many times have we seen the picture of the man without arms or legs standing on a ladder painting a house! These presentations of the subject cause us to think that there is an enormous task ahead of us in making, by mechanical means, whole men out of little more than remnants. This is not so. There may be a dozen such cases, there may be a hundred, but to take this as indicative of the problem of re-education is to warp the judgment and misdirect the general endeavor. In this respect it is camouflage.

Canada is understood to have about three quarters of a million men in the field. She has been at war three years. The number of men returned who have undergone amputation are less than 900. The total number of blinded is thirty-two. Ninety per cent of all returned wounded go back to their old jobs, leaving only ten per cent to be re-educated. In France ninety-nine per cent of the wounded return to their previous occupations. We may expect the same percentage in Canada, where until now, however, "only the more seriously disabled have been returned."

The Province of Ontario has sent 400,000, or half of the entire Canadian contingent, into the field. Up to October, 8,910, or two per cent, had returned incapacitated for service by wounds of the severer sort. Of these only 101 have lost one arm. Only one lost both hands. Only four were blinded. Seventy-two lost one eye. Thirteen lost one hand. Twelve lost one foot. Six lost both legs. Only three are "totally disabled."

In one factory in the United States famous for its efficiency and high wages are 1,585 defective men whose listed defects are singularly like those of the 8,910 in the Ontario list except for the cases just noted. Its force is never thought of as deficient in any respect, but the reverse. Its employees number one tenth of the Ontario soldiery, and its defective men are twice as many.

Undoubtedly many more men are injured annually in American industries than we may expect in years of war.

Seventy per cent of all wounded men never had a trade. Consequently the teaching of any trade or any kind of machine operations to any of this seventy per cent gives them better incomes and easier work than their former occupations.

To take typical examples: A brick-layer and mason was shot through the shoulder. He cannot raise his right hand above his shoulder, cannot plaster overhead or high up. He has an eight grade schooling. He is apt. He becomes an exceptionally good draftsman. A machine shop

fitter used to handling heavy pieces was struck across the abdomen. The muscles are so weakened that he cannot lift much. He is quickly taught enough of the machinist trade to give him good work and wages. A man with one leg is taught a sedentary job. A man without a trade and not especially apt is taught to operate one or two rather simple machines at better wages than he formerly enjoyed.

Thus re-education to the extent of from ninety-seven per cent to ninety-nine per cent is nothing else than ordinary industrial education—simply a matter of “sawing wood” in established industrial schools, in day continuation, and night classes, and in factories where the crippled man is so nearly competent to do the proposed work that the employer can properly put him to work, supervised by some one in the establishment under direction of the responsible public authority.

It is a relief to get away from the discussions upon this subject in the States and witness the practical, everyday doing of this work in Canada. There it is directed jointly by two bodies, one, the Military Hospital Commission which has military direction of injured men until they are ready to re-enter civil life, and the other the Provincial authorities for Industrial Education.

Judging from a joint meeting of these two bodies (or was it their special committees?), in furtherance of their work three fourths of the Military Hospitals Commission are returned, wounded officers, engineers by profession. The remainder are medical and other men. Who better could understand and further the vocational needs of the rank and file? The members of the training force are the Director of Vocational Training for the Province and the regular or especially appointed Directors of Vocational Training in the several districts and cities.

To see these bodies at work in everyday fashion, with the spectacular eliminated, and no flitting questionnaire or blue-sky conjecturing, is to wish that the whole matter in the States may be left to the authorities in industrial education who know how to train ordinary folk in the ordinary occupations, with a coöperating Military, or quasi-military, Hospitals Commission like Canada's, and with the same kind of personnel.

Canada has found no place for the spectacular. Some of her regiments have been decimated. Her soldiers have gone the limit, and she is going the limit in care of the injured. Until now, however, and apparently in prospect also, re-education means, and can mean, only the kind of industrial training that is always given in educationally intelligent countries to all workers who need it, with only a little more intensive personal consideration of the capacities and limitations of the pupil.

From the startling pictures we commonly see it may be judged that the Federal Government may well secure one or more of each of the mechanical contrivances that have been developed in Europe to replace lost members, and that some institution may well be prepared to use these and other contrivances for the exceedingly few who may need them.

It is said that a man who loses both legs almost never recovers. Also that a man whose face is badly “mussed up” soon dies of poison. A world of sympathy and help will be given to those who are extremely crippled. This is done in peace times. But these cases do not in any sense constitute the problem of re-education. They are few, special and apart, if we can judge from Canada and from what she tells us of the European experience.

The Canadian wounded are now coming back from base hospitals abroad in much greater numbers than heretofore, so that the figures here given will be largely increased, but it is not expected that the problem will be different. Existing facilities for industrial training may need to be greatly increased because of returning soldiers, but they need to be increased anyway, because America has only begun to provide facilities for the industrial training of her working people. The extension of existing facilities along the usual lines will enable these extensions to serve perfectly in later peace times.

There is apparently no need of special institutions, which would be of little use in later years, or of large numbers of instructors set apart for this particular problem. It commonly takes six months or less to train a disabled soldier, and that training enriches the experience and develops the abilities of the industrial instructors in the regular work.

We have most excellent institutions for the lame, the blind, and all other defectives. Why not simply and quietly further strengthen the masterful directors of these institutions, and send our worst injured to them?

It is hoped that the statements here made will not be taken as an attempt to do more than state broadly the main features of the situation. They are based upon the *Report of the Work of the Military Hospitals Commission of Canada*, May, 1917, and attendance upon a recent meeting of the controlling authorities of the Province of Ontario.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

H. E. MILES,

(Chairman, Section on Industrial  
Training for the War Emergency.)

### A PLEA TO THE PRESIDENT

SIR,—I have read with a mingled sense of admiration and pain your editorial, "Thank God for Wilson," in the January number of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW. Admiration, because of the brilliant ability and justice with which you have characterized a great and critical situation. Pain, because, at this supreme crisis of national and world interests, there should exist the conditions which compel the criticism.

Politically I am a Republican who patriotically and intensely wishes the largest and broadest success for Mr. Wilson's Administration. I earnestly covet for him not only the promptings of highest patriotism, but also that statesmanlike breadth and wisdom which the present so supremely demands. If his future shall demonstrate this, I could easily forget that he was ever a political partizan.

To a multitude of studious observers of public men and events, it is not altogether easy to obliterate the memories, and the fears which such memories engender, of both words and acts recorded in the first term of Mr. Wilson's Administration, which, taken together, were frequently at cross-purposes, not only failing to give clue to large, clear, heroic, and consistent national policies, but which in the thought of millions of the best-thinking Americans seemed partizan rather than patriotic, vacillating rather than firm, exhibiting more of calculation in the interests of political issues than of unselfish concern for momentous and over-shadowing world-interests.